

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The development, consolidation, renovation and sustainability of the National Scientific and Technological System (NSTS) require an employment policy that ensures the integration of highly qualified and internationally competitive human resources.

The Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) establishes the “Investigator FCT” Program, aimed at the most competitive young researchers, to stimulate and support the development of scientific careers in the NSTS. The Program is intended to represent a formal proof of excellence for the researchers and shall facilitate the recruitment of highly qualified researchers by higher education institutions, State laboratories, other public institutions and also private institutions and companies.

The “Investigator FCT” Program starts in 2012, and FCT will provide 80 contracts with PhD holders for the NSTS, as provided for in Article 49 of Law 64-B/2011, of 30 December, of the State Budget Law for the year 2012.

The Program that is now launched focuses on the researcher and on his/her scientific research project and specifically targets PhD holders wishing to initiate or consolidate an independent scientific career. The call will thus take into account the applicant’s track-record and scientific proposals and will ascribe a considerable weight to the indicators of scientific independence.

It is the researchers’ responsibility to identify the host institution and to obtain its agreement to carry out the research project and the career development plan. The host institutions must provide all means, including materials, support services, critical mass and institutional policies that ensure the implementation of the research project and career development plan. The researcher’s right to mobility is to be maintained during the whole duration of the contract.

FCT will celebrate fixed-term employment contracts with the researchers selected under this call and will provide, where necessary, the initial funding for the development of the research projects.

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## I. Candidates

The call is aimed at researchers holding a PhD degree at three levels, stipulated according to the number of years after the award of the degree and the number of years working as an independent researcher. Independent researchers are scientists that have already established themselves as a research leader in their own right, often as Principal Investigators or Group Leaders, supervising a research team and by attracting funding in competitive grant applications by FCT or other national and international funding agencies:

- a) *“starting grants”* (equivalent to index 195 of the Scientific Research Career Remuneration Statute, corresponding to the first level of the category of Auxiliary Researcher), aimed at PhD holders with less than 6 years after the award of the degree, with no need for previous scientific independence;
- b) *“development grants”* (equivalent to index 220 of the Scientific Research Career Remuneration Statute, corresponding to the first level of the category of Principal Investigator), aimed at PhD holders with more than 6 years and less than 12 years after the award of the degree, being independent researchers for less than 6 years;
- c) *“advanced grants”* (equivalent to index 285 of the Scientific Research Career remuneration statute, corresponding to the first level of the category of Coordinating Researcher), aimed at PhD holders who are independent researchers for more than 6 years.

In adding up the time periods outlined above, a maximum margin of tolerance of 11 months is acceptable for this call, provided this is duly justified.

In all cases, the applicants must hold a CV that is considered competitive by international standards and demonstrate a track-record and achievements appropriate to their research field and career stage. These include:

- a) Publications in major international peer-reviewed scientific journals;
- b) Grants funded in national and international competitive applications;
- c) Granted patents (if applicable);

- d) Participation in advanced training activities including supervision of PhD students and post-docs.

The CV must be subtitled in the form FCT\_CV provided in the FCT website.

The application must include the documentation referred in Art. 6 of the Regulations of this Program.

Each candidate may apply only to one level. Should one candidate apply for more than one level, his/her application will be excluded from the evaluation process.

The FCT Investigators, independently from the level they are applying to, will carry out their scientific research projects under the regime of exclusive dedication, without prejudice to the stipulations under number 3 of article 12 of the regulations.

Any financial support from FCT for the initial costs of the research project will only be considered for the level "starting grants", provided the applicant makes proof that he/she does not benefit from any funding under national or international projects, higher than the amount allocated. The award of this funding is governed mutatis mutandis by the regulations governing access to funding for scientific research and technological development projects — 2010 (with 2011 amendments), published in Diário da República, 2nd series – no. 176 – 9 September 2010, with amendments in accordance with Aviso no. 8484/2011, Diário da República, 2nd series, no. 68 – 6 April 2011.

The initial funding, which is foreseen for exploratory research projects, may not exceed fifty thousand euros.

## **II. Host institutions**

1. Eligible host institutions under this call are institutions of the NSTS defined under Article 3 of the regulations.
2. The application must include a formal acceptance of the host institution specifying the conditions for the integration of the career development plan of the applicant in the scientific strategy of the institution, as well as a guarantee that the applicant will be granted the appropriate conditions to carry out her/his research projects and pursue a career as an independent scientist.
3. In view of progressively renewing the qualified human resources in science and technology the institutional commitment to hire the Investigators FCT beyond

the period of FCT funding, will be valued by all possible means. This includes the evaluation exercise of the of public institutions of the NSTS, namely higher education institutions, other public research institutions, State laboratories and companies

4. The provisions of the preceding paragraph also apply to private higher education institutions, private non-profit institutions benefitting of the status of Associated Laboratory and private companies.

### III. Evaluation of the applications

There are two evaluation stages:

- a) The first stage of evaluation is carried out by the four Scientific Councils of FCT, which will be assisted, where necessary, by specially designated panels. These panels will verify, in summary, if the application corresponds to the level the researcher is applying to and select up to 30% of the best candidates, based on the elements provided in the application form;
- b) In the second stage of evaluation, the applications will be evaluated by a single panel of international experts of recognized merit according to their absolute merit and ranked according to their relative merit; the panel may carry out interviews with the applicants, if deemed of interest.

### IV. Application period and general aspects

The call will be open between 02 April 2012 and 08 May 2012, 17h (Lisbon time).

FCT reserves the right to not fill all vacancies announced in the official Announcement of the call, in accordance with number 4 of Article 4 of the regulations.

The FCT may create a reserve list if the number of candidates approved and judged of high priority, by the panel, is higher than the number of positions open in this call.

The earliest starting date of the contracts to be celebrated under this call is 01/10/2012.

The "Researcher FCT" Program is financed by national funds and, where eligible, by European Union funds from the ESF, in accordance with number 2 of Article 1 of the regulations of this program.